

Appendix B

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SUMMARY

About us

Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation (BLCF) is the leading local grantmaker in the county, distributing nearly £15million pounds locally since our inception and establishing a national reputation for an innovative, community-focussed and strategic approach.

Our aim is to be a catalyst for positive social change in the county by connecting people, ideas, resources and needs to make a lasting difference. We strongly believe that there should be opportunity for all and the lives of the most disadvantaged should be transformed through innovative, community-based solutions.

We are passionate about improving the lives of people in Bedfordshire and Luton and we are known for our ground-breaking initiatives, for our investment in supporting local charities and for our deep relationships with grassroots groups in our area. Our work has been recognised nationally for the impact we have made, but we remain firmly rooted in our communities.

During the last 12 months we have awarded over £4.65million in grants to 186 different organisations across Bedfordshire, benefitting over 732,000 people.

The top 3 main issues being supported were:

- 1) Health, wellbeing and serious illness (incl. mental Health)
- 2) Poverty & disadvantage
- 3) Stronger Communities/community support & development

We are committed to being an equitable funder. We are part of the **Funders for Race Equalities Alliance** (FREAA) and a partner with the new **BAOBAB Foundation** and **LBC Fairness Taskforce** and contribute our data on grants to a national alliance to combat inequality in funding distribution within diverse communities and groups working primarily in diverse communities. Compared to the national data we deliver the following;

- 40% of our grants were designed to benefit BAME communities – nationally the figure is 23%
- 47% of funds went to organisations who had the mission or purpose of supporting BAME or minority communities – nationally that was 14%
- 35% of funding went to BAME organisations – national that was only 6%

How we work

We manage grants through our experienced staff team who use a dedicated grants management software system to manage applications and to ensure all due diligence checks are made. We pride ourselves on our knowledge of the County and its needs and regularly work with partners and stakeholders to ensure our programmes align with this need and undertake specific research data using the **VitalSigns** initiative to inform our work and strategic focus.

We run a **Small Charities Forum** where we bring groups together to access our **Grant +** offer of support and advice for grant making as well as providing information around particular areas of interest, e.g, fundraising, marketing, financial good practice. We also signpost groups to more specialist or in-depth support, for example CVS and Cranfield Trust and help redirect projects to appropriate funders working across the Country. In total there are 24 funders working in Bedfordshire and to ensure we join up our thinking we also run a regular **Bedfordshire and Luton Funders Network** where we share data, respond to need, support strategic use and distribution of national funds.

BLCF is further able to access national funding opportunities through.

1. Our partnership with **UK Communities Foundation** (UKCF) – our national membership organisation who work directly with Government and National agencies to distribute funding from corporates, governments initiatives and through the network of 46 Community Foundations across the UK.
2. Our partnership with **National Emergencies Trust** (NET) – set up specifically to respond to national emergency they have an MOU with us to speed up distribution of funds in response to an emergency. In 2021-20 Covid-19 the response was a national appeal which led to £98m of funding secured to distribute. Through working with us at BLCF we were able to secure and share £764k of funding across 128 grants to organisations in Bedfordshire

Success in Luton

Over the last 3years we have awarded 294 grants totalling nearly **£8million** pounds to 143 organisations, who are based in or deliver their work in Luton, benefiting 556,724 people.

The above information also includes figures for the LLAL Community Investment Fund (CIF) which specifically distributed almost £3million pounds across 34 grants, benefiting 307,804 people.

Proposal

Luton Borough Council (LBC) have identified a potential pot of funding worth £1.5m which has been awarded to support the post covid recovery of community work and services across Luton. The post covid recovery is likely to impact on the charity sector for the next few years and as such LBC are seeking a partnership to act as a distributor for these funds as part of its plans for community support and to target key priority areas, which includes;

1. Mental health
2. Social isolation
3. People vulnerable to Covid 19
4. People made vulnerable by covid19
5. Disparity from protected characteristics

BLCF proposed model

As an experienced grantmaker we propose the following grant making model to support distribution of these funds.

1. Firstly, we would recommend spreading grants over a period of **3 years** (£500k made available per year) to ensure we can build resilience in organisations for which short term funding is challenging and does not contribute to financial or organisational sustainability.
2. Grants to be developed against the criteria identified above, across 3 levels to ensure some flexibility for organisations applying;
 - Level 1– Up to £1.5k – for 1 year only, quick grants to encourage applications into later phases (contributing basic data and case studies back)
 - Level 2 – Up to £20k – for work up to 2 years (contributing to outcome reporting and evaluation)
 - Level 3 – Up to £50k – for work up to a maximum of 3 years (contributing to quarterly impact case studies and outcome reporting and evaluation)
3. We would anticipate awarding Grants in this model each year approx. (adjusted down in yr 1 for short year).

In Year 1 (of the 3 years programme) – deliver Level 1, 2, 3 grant options.

In Year 2 – deliver Level 1, 2 grant options only.

In Year 3 – deliver Level 1 grant options only.

Cost

Activity	Est No. Grant awarded	Total Grants	Annual Contract
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 – 2021-22 	Level 1 x 20 £1500 grant Level 2 x 20 £20k grants Level 3 x 8 £50k Grants	£30,000 £400,000 £400,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 2 – 2022-23 	Level 1 x 20 £1500 grant Level 2 x20 £20k grants	£30,000 £400,000	

• Year 3 – 2023-24	Level 1 x 20 £1500 grant	£30,000	
		£1,320,000	
	BLCF Fee 10% standard (to be agreed and discuss)	£150,000	
	Outreach to level 1 groups (over 3yrs)	£25,000	
	Monitoring and evaluation reports	£5,000	
TOTAL		£1,500,000	

For more information and to discuss details;

Contact Karen Perkins, BLCF CEO at Karen.Perkins@blcf.org.uk